



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

3 November 2003

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the
PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to

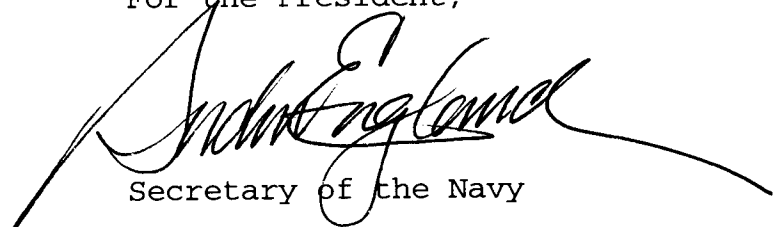
I MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance in action against enemy forces in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from 21 March to 24 April 2003. During this period, I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) (REIN) conducted the longest sequence of coordinated combined arms overland attacks in the history of the Marine Corps. From the border between Kuwait and Iraq, to the culmination of hostilities north of Baghdad, I MEF advanced nearly 800 kilometers under sustained and heavy combat. Utilizing the devastating combat power of organic aviation assets, coupled with the awesome power resident in the ground combat elements, and maintaining momentum through the herculean efforts of combat service support elements, I MEF destroyed nine Iraqi Divisions. This awesome display of combat power was accomplished while simultaneously freeing the Iraqi people from more than 30 years of oppression and reestablishing basic infrastructure in the country. During the 33 days of combat, to the transition to civil-military operations, I MEF sustained a tempo of operations never before seen on the modern battlefield, conducting four major river crossings, maintaining the initiative, and sustaining forces. The ferocity and duration of the campaign was made possible through the skills and determination of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coalition Partners comprising I MEF at all levels, all echelons, and in all occupational fields. By their outstanding courage, aggressive fighting spirit, and untiring devotion to duty, the officers and enlisted personnel of I Marine Expeditionary Force (REIN) reflected great credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President,



Secretary of the Navy